

Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2003

The Honorable C.W. "Bill" Young Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H218 – the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Obey:

H.R. 6 as recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives raises the authorization level for LIHEAP from \$2 billion to \$3.4 billion. It appears the Senate bill will again contain similar language. We believe it is not enough to merely increase the authorization. We must commit to fully fund the appropriations for the program as well.

The undersigned come from different climates and from all over the country. Our low-income families have different needs. Some cannot afford to heat their homes in the winter. Others cannot cool their homes in the summer. All of us have constituents who at some point during the year are forced to choose between keeping their homes at a healthy temperature and putting food on the table.

Recently, LIHEAP has only been able to serve 20% of the eligible households nationally. This year, because of a harsh winter, and rising fuel prices, the program may only be able to reach 15% of eligible households.

The level of funding for LIHEAP has fallen below what it was in 1985, even though the population has increased. In fact, if LIHEAP is to have the same purchasing power in 2004 as it did in 1982, it must be funded at the \$3 billion level.

We urge you as appropriators to fully fund LIHEAP at \$3.4 billion, should H.R. 6 or other authorizing legislation become law. (But if it does not, we must fully fund LIHEAP's regular appropriation at the current \$2 billion level.)

We appreciate your attention to this matter that is essential to the health and well-being of our nation's neediest – particularly the elderly and the young who are most vulnerable to extreme temperatures.

Sincerely,

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Mike Doyle	Baron Hill
Dennie Thompson Bennie Thompson	The Bishop
Chris John	Earl Blumenauer Earl Blumenauer
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